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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

May 2, 1952

Subject: Belgian desire to have EDC Treaty adopt 24 months military service period.

Participants: Baron Silvercruys, Belgian Ambassador

Mr. Bruce - Under Secretary
WE - R. D. McClelland

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Ambassador Silvercruys called on me at his urgent request at 3:45. He said that he had just received a personal telegram from Foreign Minister Van Zeeland, and then proceeded to outline its contents. The points the Ambassador made are reported in the Department's telegram no. 6409 of April 30, (7:07 p.m.) to Paris, which was repeated to Brussels (as 1672), London (5585), Rome (5079), The Hague (1409), and Luxembourg (120). At the end of his presentation the Ambassador handed me a "précis" of his remarks, an informal translation of which is enclosed.

As an example of the practical difficulties which could arise from this Belgian insistence on EDC adoption of a 24 months' t... of military service for all members, I cited the French case ... told Baron Silvercruys that imposing 24 months conscriptio... France would be a practical folly. I pointed out that the... already have more men under the colors than they have equ...

With respect to the Belgian request for United States intercession with the other EDC countries to bring them a... the Belgian thesis on 24 months' service, I told the Ambassador that I could say no more than that we would agree to look at it.

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Since the Ambassador was coming to us with a request I said that would like to take the opportunity to ask him for something. I told him that we were intensely interested - and I added that here I was speaking for the Secretary - in having the Belgian Lower Chamber ratify the Schuman Plan as soon as possible. The only outstanding ratifications were those of the Lower Houses in Belgium and Italy, and the Luxembourg Parliament; and we understood the latter would quickly follow Belgian suit. I emphasized that there would be considerable psychological and political advantage, particularly in the United States where the Congress was very much interested in the matter, in getting the Schuman Plan fully ratified before the signing of the German Contractuals and the EDC. I said we had wired our Embassy in Brussels on this, but that I would appreciate it if the Ambassador would also report our views to his Government. Baron Silvercruys replied that he would do so immediately.

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Enclosure:

Translation of Belgian precis on EDC.

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